

South Dakota State Library Evaluation and Planning Project

Draft Final Report

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Executive Summary

This six-month study of the programs, resources, and role of the South Dakota State Library (SDSL) has resulted in many changes already in both the state library operations and in the dialogue about libraries and library services within the state. No matter what happens in the future regarding the recommendations and the work of the consultant, the fabric of the library network has been changed by the very act of asking questions and challenging individuals and groups to think differently about library services, the role of the state library, the role of local libraries, and the future of information and books.

The study has resulted in two primary recommendations for the state library. These recommendations are:

1. That the state library adjusts its programs and services to enable staff members to engage in work that has the potential to bring about long-term change and development of library resources and services to all citizens of the state.
2. That the state library ceases operating as a glorified public library and become more of an agent for change and development of library resources within the state of South Dakota.

These recommendations have contributed to the creation and adoption of a newly defined mission for the South Dakota State Library. The State Library Board, at its meeting on April 19, 2006, voted unanimously to adopt a new mission. It meets the criteria for a good mission—easily learned and understood, and measurable. The mission is: "The South Dakota State Library provides leadership for innovation and excellence in libraries." This mission has been a guiding principle in the preparation of this report.

This report contains some very specific recommendations in addition to the two major ones above. However, most of the additional recommendations are simply further implications of the change in role that is recommended for the state library. When possible, the rationale for the recommendations has been included, but sometimes the full rationale would require far more detail than is needed for the purposes of this report.

The Appendices have been used to summarize data and the findings and comments from some of the explorative stages of the study. Here you will find a summary of the comments from the public meetings and focus groups as well as information from the conference calls in January. Additionally, you will find some interesting data about the reference work at the state library including a general classification of the type of questions as well as some sample questions handled by the staff.

It has been a pleasure working with the library community in South Dakota and particularly working with the staff at the state library, the board members, and Dr. Rick Melmer. I trust that I will be able to continue to hold a type of dual citizenship—Montana and South Dakota!

Introduction

The purpose of this six-month long study of the South Dakota State Library (SDSL) was to evaluate the existing programs, services, and operations of the state library and to recommend changes to help the library be more responsive to the changing needs of South Dakota citizens. Instant gratification is not just a term, but a reality in the information environment of today. The ability of the ordinary person to access online magazine or journal databases means that information that once took months to be produced in paper, distributed, placed on library shelves, and finally indexed can now be found almost instantaneously by anyone who is able to get on-line. Access to the Internet and library databases changes the entire definition of library services. As the context for information and library services has changed, the corresponding expectations of citizens in South Dakota have changed as well. Other agencies of government here and elsewhere have recognized the need to reinvent themselves in a manner more responsive to the current needs and demands of an informed citizenry that expects accountability, efficiency, strategic management, and instant service. Libraries also need to change the way they define themselves, the way they serve their customers, and the way that they interact with one another.

Libraries find themselves today facing the growing pressures of an information economy at both the local and global levels. Changing business practices demand that essential information services be delivered immediately. A renewed understanding of the importance of an informed citizenry for a functioning democracy is also a key issue driving the reform of all types of libraries. This is especially true for state libraries given that funding levels no longer allow them simply to add new services while maintaining all of the old ones. As in other areas of responsible government, hard choices need to be made so that limited resources can be leveraged to their best advantage on behalf of citizens. This project is an attempt to prioritize goals, make hard choices, and to move forward in ways that produce the greatest benefit from limited resources. Such choices require courage and the ability to see what is possible if efforts are directed towards specific outcomes and incremental progress and away from maintaining the status quo. The South Dakota State Library Board and staff members are committed to improving the state library as a positive force for the improvement of access to excellent information services in the state with a recognition that the journey of a thousand miles starts with but a few well chosen steps.

During the course of the study one of the themes that emerged from the library community itself was the failure of the state library to be actively and meaningfully engaged with all types and sizes of libraries. The state library's work, over many years, with the smaller public libraries is acknowledged by everyone. But there appears to be a widespread perception that the state library has centered most of its library development work, its continuing education offerings, and its LSTA funds for the benefit of those in the smallest libraries. While these libraries and those who work in them do need assistance with training, consulting, and professional development, the impact or "bang for the buck" is often times quite small and affects only a very small segment of the citizens. Many librarians expressed their opinion that the state library ought to find ways to be more visible to the other segments of the library community. When the academic librarians were asked about the state library, they could only comment on the following things three things: the state librarian's role on the SDLN Executive Committee, the courier service for

moving materials around the state, especially for the larger libraries, and the databases and other statewide electronic resources. They had little or no knowledge at all regarding the other activities of the state library, the role of the state library in the development of strong library resources, and the use of federal grant funds within the state. While one can argue that their perceptions are not entirely supported by the facts, their perceptions are their reality. The eight or ten largest public libraries likewise felt that many of the people at the state library are very nice, they were unclear except for the databases and courier services just what the state library was all about. There is a clear need for the state library to assume a leadership role within the whole library community by being more actively engaged as an agency in the issues facing all types of libraries. The primary recommendation growing out of this study is for the state library to more actively assume a leadership role and to consider its strategic positioning on behalf of libraries in all its endeavors.

Statutory Role of State Library

The majority of state libraries west of the Mississippi River were created early in the 20th Century through legislative action. Three primary purposes were then recognized by state governments: the need for information services for state government itself, the need for an organized depository for all state government publications, and the need for a centralized library collection to serve as a backup for the often seriously under-funded local libraries scattered across each state. While this role was never exactly defined, the mandate to “serve the citizens” of the state often resulted in the creation of a central library collection with the characteristics of a local public and/or school library. Selecting, purchasing, classifying, cataloging, storing, maintaining, and transporting such central collections of books has proven to be less and less cost effective or efficient. This *just-in-case* model no longer can serve us well in a very *just-in-time* world. In the one hundred years since the enabling legislation for state libraries things have changed—just a bit!

During the course of this study it became increasingly clear that while the statutory mandates for the state library do not need any changes, the ways in which those mandates have been interpreted and met need reconsideration. This study provided the opportunity and the requirement for the state library board and staff members to step back and engage in strategic thinking, rather than being buried in the efforts to meet the day-to-day demands of an agency whose *popularity* continues to grow as its statistical reports attest. By looking at its current effectiveness and its ultimate goal of providing information resources for all citizens of the state, the state library board has formulated and adopted a newly crafted mission statement that more closely matches its role at this time. That new mission—***The South Dakota State Library provides leadership for innovation and excellence in libraries***—is helping to set service and resource priorities that will enable the state library through its qualified staff to help local libraries of whatever type to best serve the citizens throughout the state.

As with any setting of priorities, as some services and programs become more important others will, by necessity, become less important. It is hoped that the library community and the citizens will understand the need for change and for some shifting of priorities in order to achieve a more sustained and broader-based improvement in library

services and access to information for those who live, work, go to school, and play in South Dakota.

Braille & Talking Books

Laws have been amended to prescribe additional roles for state libraries including the provision of services and resources for the visually impaired through a federal program. This service, the Braille and Talking Books Program (B & BT) at SDSL, is primarily funded by the U.S. government and provides Braille and audio books and equipment free of charge, delivered directly to their residences, for individuals who qualify for the services because of visual difficulties or other physical limitations that prevent them from using traditional print resources for education, employment, recreation, and self development. In South Dakota this service currently serves approximately 5,000 citizens but it is estimated that there are between 20,000 and 25,000 residents of the state who could be using this program. In addition, as part of the Department of Education, the state library fulfills the Department's responsibility to provide Braille or audio versions of textbooks for all visually impaired students in South Dakota from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Library Development

Another important recent role for state libraries is the management of federal grant funds and other programs to aid and advance the abilities of local libraries to better meet the needs of the citizens in their communities. This role also includes a greatly expanded need for consulting and continuing education for those operating and making policy decisions for libraries—in all types of libraries. Such programs have become increasingly important for all types of libraries as the knowledge needed to keep pace with the ever-changing technological tools and the expectations of customers continue to grow. While public and school libraries are primarily the responsibility of local governments and school districts, their need for supplemental expertise and the guidance of the informed staff members from the state library has grown. The state library has a legislative mandate to “increase the proficiency of library personnel through provision of in-service and continuing education programs for library personnel employed in the state.”¹ The state library is also directed to “provide advice and assistance to libraries, library boards, units of local government empowered to establish libraries . . . in matters concerning the establishment, support, operation, improvement, and coordination of libraries and library services, and in the cooperation between libraries.”² All of this serves to authorize and to emphasize the importance of the continuing education and consulting roles of the state library.

During the current Bush administration, the federal funding for these activities has actually grown as the importance of school libraries in the No the Child Left Behind initiative and the role of public libraries as essential for citizens of all ages have both been emphasized. The South Dakota State Library has not been in a position to provide the level of consulting and continuing education necessary for the local library communities. The state library has fewer than 3 FTE employees assigned to library development and the state library has not always been able to fill those positions. Recruiting outstanding individuals with consulting and training skills along with library expertise and experience,

¹ SDCL 14-1-4 (2)

² SDCL 14-1-46

especially regarding rural areas schools and libraries, is difficult with low state government salaries. In addition, there are limited employment opportunities for spouses and the library development jobs require travel to rural areas across the entire 75,885 square miles of the state during all seasons of the year. Even when fully staffed, the state library's current commitments allow only 12% to 15% of their human resources to be involved in the leadership, consulting, training, facilitating, and grant administration although these are the functions most likely to result in long-term, sustainable change in the library fabric of South Dakota. This is one area where the re-allocation of human resources within the state library is essential.

Citizens: Un-served & Underserved

The responsibility for providing adequate library services for the citizens of South Dakota is the responsibility and "a necessary function of government at all levels."³ Furthermore, the importance of the state library in promoting appropriate library services for all citizens and "cooperation among and between libraries"⁴ to achieve the policy of the state that "library services should be available widely throughout the state to bring within convenient reach of the people cultural, informational, and educational resources essential to the improvement of their quality of life"⁵ is the first library related policy of the state. And the state library agency is "charged with the extension and development of library services throughout the state."⁶ There is more language supporting the importance of this role of the state library including, under the duties of the library office, "promote adequate library service for all the people of the state."⁷

All of this points to the importance of the state library as an agent to assist local governments and/or interested citizens in establishing appropriate library services for un-served and underserved areas of the state. This is a role of growing importance in an age of information where economic development, individual career success, and quality of personal life is dependent upon knowing and understanding the data, the trends, and the forces impinging upon or driving change. Access to information "within convenient reach" is essential. It is strongly recommended that the state library include goals and objectives in its strategic plans that will move this agenda forward. LSTA grant funds might be used to encourage and implement innovative or even "old fashioned" methods of expanding the areas of the state that provide local library services. It is not appropriate, and not within the legislative mandate for the state library to serve as the public library for such areas, but it is their responsibility to encourage and facilitate the establishment of local library services. By ceasing to serve a few people with personalized public library service directly from the state library, staff and resources can be made available to improve the information environment for all the citizens of an area.

One segment of the state population that is truly underserved by libraries is that of the Native American peoples on the reservations. This is not news to anyone. An increasing number of state libraries are recognizing their responsibilities to facilitate, encourage, and advance the quality of library services for our "First Peoples" or First

³ SDCL 14-1-40 (2)

⁴ SDCL 14-1-40 (4)

⁵ SDCL 14-1-40 (1)

⁶ SDCL 14-1-42

⁷ SDCL 14-1-44 (1)

Nations.”⁸ Various approaches are being taken in other states. It is recommended that SDSL consider the possibility of assigning the role of providing coordination, communication, networking, training, and consulting to a librarian with library development responsibilities. LaVera Rose, as a Native American from South Dakota, is ideally qualified for these responsibilities. She understands the cultural and language issues, knows people throughout the Native American community in the state, has a desire to work with the reservation and urban populations and is a qualified librarian. Her existing responsibilities and the limited human resources of the library make it impossible for her to be assigned such library development responsibilities for more than 30% or 40% of her current job, but it would be a start towards helping to improve the library services to this underserved population.

Study Process

The study process consisted of the following steps conducted by the consultant:

1. Review of all pertinent documents including enabling legislation, the budgetary situation, operating statistics, personnel resources, planning documents, and annual reports.
2. Review of the physical plant and its use.
3. Individual interviews with all state library employees.
4. A planning meeting with the state library board (appointed by the governor).
5. Nine conference calls with segments of the library community in an attempt to raise issues, to change thinking and to receive feedback regarding the perceptions of the state library as it has operated in recent years. (summary in Appendix A)
6. Nine public meetings held around the state that included both invited individuals representing key segments of the general population and library community as well as any other interested citizens. (summary in Appendix B)
7. Use data for the SDSL was collected from January through April to clarify the use patterns and types of users and questions. (summary of reference questions and use data in Appendix C)
8. The subject and extent of reference questions was tracked from January through May to determine the nature and types of questions actually being handled. (see Appendix D)
9. Meetings with the state librarian, board members, staff members, the Secretary of Education, and other interested parties as the need arose.
10. Facilitation of a planning meeting with the board to draft a new mission and to identify priorities for the future as well as those things that might need to be discontinued.
11. Facilitation of a retreat with all state library staff to explore the implications of the new mission and the general directions in which the board anticipates programs and services to be expanded or reduced.
12. Preparation of this document as a draft report with specific recommendations for the board, the Secretary of Education and the state library staff to take under consideration.
13. Presentations at public meetings across the state during mid-June to present

⁸ Term used by Canadian government to refer to Native American peoples.

- the primary recommendations and implications resulting from this draft report.
14. A final report to be prepared and presented to the Secretary of Education by early July.

This study was begun in November, 2005 and will conclude in July, 2006 except for any on-going consultation requested by the state library, the board or the Secretary of Education.

Recommendations

All of the recommendations that follow are based upon the new mission of the state library. That mission is: **The South Dakota State Library provides leadership for innovation and excellence in libraries.** It is expected that the timeline for the transformation of the state library from a 20th Century operation into one more fit for the challenges of the 21st Century is two full years, from July 1, 2006 until June 30, 2008. Some of the needed changes require that there be concomitant changes in the library community in South Dakota. In order for the state library to achieve its goals, libraries of all types and sizes need to accept increased responsibilities for the long-term and widest possible information access for all citizens of the state of South Dakota. This means that in addition to the work that the state library board and staff will be doing over the next two years, librarians, school boards and administrations, public library staff members and boards, as well as academic librarians will need to rethink their roles in helping to achieve a more dynamic and vibrant library environment within the State of South Dakota. The ultimate goal is to provide, through a variety of different means, the best possible opportunity for citizens to have access to all the educational and professional information they need to assist them in their responsibilities and to have the leisure reading, listening and viewing that helps them to achieve self-actualization in the modern world.

Primary Recommendations

The broadest recommendation is that the South Dakota State Library devote more of its human capital to the direct achievement of its mission. This can be accomplished by enabling qualified staff members to provide the leadership, consulting, continuing education, facilitation, negotiation, and grant administration to develop a more robust library environment through shared resources, collaborative efforts, and the definition of a vision that can motivate others towards excellence and innovation. Its leadership role needs to drive all decisions, all human resource assignments, all initiatives, and all activities for SDSL. If something does not contribute to this leadership role than it should no longer be part of the agenda for the state library. This also means, however, that the state library must find ways to cease doing things that are no longer necessary to fulfill its mission or that can be accomplished through collaborative efforts of local libraries rather than through the direct provision of materials by the state library. In other words, the SDSL needs to cease being a public library. By focusing on its leadership and facilitation role the state library can provide coordination of services among and between libraries, promote appropriate levels of service and resources for local libraries, facilitate problem solving, consult with individual libraries and groups of libraries, provide shared electronic resources too expensive for local libraries to purchase, and provide continuing education

offerings to equip board members and library staff members with the knowledge and skills they need to be responsive to their clients. In this way SDSL will directly affect the ability of South Dakota libraries to provide the needed resources. In addition, the state library should work to improve further the ways in which it fulfills its mandated services. These include the provision of special services and materials to the Braille and Talking Book program clients; research, training and information services for state government clients; and access to and preservation of state documents on behalf of the government and citizens of the state. In order for SDSL to be responsive to the people of South Dakota, it needs to focus on doing those things that the state library is uniquely qualified and funded to do and cease doing those things that are best done by local libraries alone or collaboratively with other libraries.

The implications of this major positive change are that changes need to be made regarding the physical collections. SDSL will cease purchasing, processing, and storing materials that are best provided through local libraries and will develop plans for the withdrawal (according to library best practices) of materials that might be relocated in community libraries throughout the state. These materials include but are not limited to:

- ✓ Adult fiction
- ✓ Children's picture books
- ✓ Children's and young adult fiction and nonfiction
- ✓ General adult nonfiction
- ✓ Large print books still of interest to the general population

Additionally, the state library will develop plans for the fair distribution of such collections among the public and school libraries in the state with the understanding that these materials must remain, during their useful life, available for interlibrary loan as they have been while being stored in Pierre. This change also means that SDSL will cease providing ordinary core public library services such as computer access for the reading of email as well as access to databases and other electronic resources that are intended to be made available through local libraries. While the building, as a public building in the state government complex, will remain open, it will no longer contain the materials or equipment that is best provided by local libraries. Its function will be as a library for libraries and as such state library staff will assist individuals with research when government documents or special collections are involved but will not dedicate personnel for local library services such as direct circulation from the collections except for state government employees in research related to their jobs. There will be fewer public access terminals and the physical plant will gradually be redesigned to facilitate the redefined work of staff. The result will be that the state library will more closely resemble the office environments found throughout the capitol complex although some space will still be required for appropriate and unique collections. These collections help the state library fulfill its legislative charge to: "maintain appropriate collections of library materials to supplement the collections of other libraries in the state and to meet the research and informational needs of the Legislature and the employees of state government."⁹ These collections might include:

- ✓ South Dakota Collection (circulates through Interlibrary Loan)
- ✓ South Dakota Native American Collection (circulates through interlibrary

⁹ SDCL 14-1-47

- loan)
- ✓ Professional library science collection, reflecting current best practices (used for consulting and continuing education with library staff members and boards)
- ✓ South Dakota state documents (in addition to the growing body of digitized documents, the paper copies are the archival copies)
- ✓ Small selection of federal documents related to South Dakota and state government work
- ✓ Small reference collection to augment electronic sources, to provide better access to the above collections, to assist with research work, and to assist other libraries when necessary
- ✓ Braille materials
- ✓ Talking book materials and equipment (will be changed from audio tape to digital format by 2008)

Additionally, there are back files of journals, microfiche and microfilm, and clipping files that will need to be evaluated and possibly dispersed or withdrawn as the changing environment dictates.

There are more specific recommendations that need to be made to further clarify the redefinition of the state library and its work. These recommendations are outlined below using categories defined by the consultant to group the types of work and clients in meaningful ways. These work group definitions may not correspond to the organizational structure now or in the future.

- ✓ Braille and Talking Book Program
- ✓ Research & Documents (formerly Reference)
- ✓ Circulation and Interlibrary Loan (borrowing and lending of materials and information)
- ✓ Technical Services (library catalog, electronic resources for statewide and/or state government access, selection, acquisition, cataloging, and processing of materials)
- ✓ Library Development (facilitation, coordination, consulting and continuing education, and grant administration)
- ✓ Administration (the state librarian)
- ✓ Operations (clerical support, financial reporting, deputy state librarian)

Braille and Talking Books

State Library Large Print Collection

The one major recommendation for this program area is the relocation to local public libraries of recent and still of interest large print books. Many public libraries already have large print collections to serve the needs of both an aging population and younger individuals with visual impairments. The titles at the state library should be located where the clients for these materials are located—in the towns and cities of the state. Walk-in users of these collections will have better access to these titles. There is the added advantage that the citizens using the large print books through their local public libraries will become users of that locally funded library, become known by the

library staffs, and subsequently will receive increasingly more personalized service in a local environment rather than from a distance through the state library.

Rotating Large Print Collections

A second recommendation resulting from the relocation of these materials is the need to work with local libraries who have received rotating collections of large print books for two month periods. These materials have been purchased, processed, housed, selected for rotation, checked-out, packaged, shipped, and then returned again every two months. Local libraries, especially smaller ones, need guidance and assistance in designing locally sustainable rotating collections of large print books. Such models might include core collections of twelve to thirty titles developed from the books at the state library. Each participating library in groups of six or eight would receive an initial collection. Every two or three months these materials would be rotated to another one of the libraries in the group. Each library would be expected to purchase at least X (2, 4, 6, 8?) number of new titles for the collections each year and be responsible for cataloging, processing, and adding the titles to rotating collections during the year. The participating libraries would manage the collections by withdrawing worn or no longer popular titles. Thus the collections and the processes would be self-sustained by the libraries choosing to participate. The state library would not be involved in managing this type of shared resource. If at some point the participating libraries cease to find the project useful, they can divide the books among themselves and close the project. Getting out of the rotating collection business would enable the state library staff to concentrate on their leadership, consulting and training roles while making local libraries more self-sufficient.

Consulting and Continuing Education for Special Populations

The staff of the B & BT program might also become more involved in consulting and continuing education with local libraries and local communities through the libraries. They have skill and expertise to share regarding the B & BT services as well as customer service issues for homebound and other special needs individuals who can also be customers of the local library. There are many unserved or under-served special populations throughout the state and the staff members of the B & BT program can help local libraries—school, public, and academic—to identify and then provide appropriate, and perhaps innovative services for these populations.

Research & Documents

Research, Training and Information Services for State Government

One of the recommendations has already been implemented at SDSL through the work of two librarians (Annie Brunskill and LaVera Rose) who have launched an aggressive approach to providing information services, research assistance, and training for employees in all state agencies. The research staff members have developed a template presentation and handouts that can easily be changed to reflect the areas of interest for a specific agency or department. They have begun doing presentations to state agency managers and key personnel and are being approached to meet with other agencies and work groups with specific types of information needs. During the study, a meeting with state government representatives provided added insights for the research staff regarding both the training and information needs of professionals at all levels in state agencies. Requests for assistance in defining research projects and strategies and

use of the databases and other electronic resources such as SoDakLIVE and SDMemory provided by the state library are showing increased use.

Training on Reference Topics for Public and School Libraries

These same librarians and other appropriate staff members can be involved in the training and consulting role by assisting library staff members in public and school libraries in the research process and the efficient use of electronic resources including search engines such as Google. It is recommended that these individuals begin to develop both online and in person training programs to help libraries help themselves and their users more effectively and rely upon the state library staff less for routine reference inquiries. An analysis of all of the reference questions handled by the state library research staff from January through April revealed that the questions coming from libraries and citizens fell roughly into the following categories:

- ✓ South Dakota history (people, places, events) and politics
- ✓ Genealogy (family history)
- ✓ Automotive repair (locating a Motor or Chilton's manual for a specific car)
- ✓ General reference facts (often just an Internet or database search away)
- ✓ Bibliographic information (book titles, authors, locations)

The majority of these questions could have been handled by most public or school libraries with a minimal level of training and staff initiative along with an understanding that it is reasonable to expect individuals working in libraries to be able to handle such requests. Helping libraries to achieve a minimal level of self-sufficiency with regards to these types of requests will greatly enhance their sense of importance as well as the perceptions of their clients with regard to what is possible and reasonable to expect from even a small library. Expanded access to electronic resources such as WorldCat for bibliographic information, a statewide catalog or a parallel electronic catalog for smaller public and school libraries, and access to an automotive repair database might enable libraries or citizens to be more self-sufficient in answering these routine types of inquiries.

Cease Handling Any Genealogy Requests

The state library should not provide extensive genealogical research. It does not have an appropriate collection to enable it to do so and it has no mandate to do so. The SDSL does provide two genealogy databases even though such research can be done through many free resources provided by LDS churches (located in some South Dakota communities) and through the LDS world renowned Family History Center in Salt Lake City. In addition, patrons can be advised that lengthy genealogy research may be conducted by experts in the field who are available for hire. Library staff could be more usefully engaged in activities that will further the welfare of libraries throughout the state and achieve the mission of the library.

Develop Scripts, Brochures, and Web Guides

In order for the Research staff to communicate to libraries and individuals both inside and outside of South Dakota the types of inquiries that are appropriate and those that might be answered through other means, the staff will need to develop scripts to help them negotiate with those making inquiries in person, via phone, email and fax. Some handouts in the form of tri-fold brochures can address many of the standard types of inquiries by giving individuals protocols regarding tools, sources, and appropriate

avenues of inquiry. Such guidelines can also be adapted for the web and used on state library web pages to assist with typical requests. Learning when to say "no, we are unable to answer that" will be perhaps one of the hardest things for staff to do during this transition period. Trying to satisfy the information needs of everyone, including grade school children from other states, can engage staff for hours and take them away from essential work. The role of back-up reference for smaller libraries will be continued through the transformation period but gradually should be supplanted by more self-sufficient and better trained staff within the libraries. Libraries of all types sometimes need to ask assistance from other libraries. The SDSL may always provide back-up reference assistance for other libraries in South Dakota but the types of questions handled ought to be much more sophisticated than they are now. As library staff members in other libraries gain confidence in their own ability to assist clients, their reliance on the state library should decrease.

Redesign of Reference and Circulation Area

The Research area will need to be one of the first physical areas to be reconfigured. Tentative plans have already been made by the library staff to reduce the number of public access computers in this area. The first reduction is scheduled for July 1st and by January, 2007 only two public access computers will remain in the state library. This action, combined with the decision to circulate materials directly to state government employees and to limit most other circulation to interlibrary loan, will greatly reduce the amount of walk-in traffic for the library. This will result in more available staff time to work with state government agencies and with libraries in training and consulting. Under the current situation, two people are scheduled during all business hours, forty hours every week, to provide assistance to the general public and to monitor both the public computers and the circulation desk. Staff might be deployed in more meaningful tasks, especially those related to changes in the nature and extent of the collections.

Library as Place

While there is much talk about the role of a library as "place" in a community or an educational setting, it is not necessary for the state library to function for the public, for other libraries, or even for state government employees as a place. Information is increasingly exchanged via email, the Internet, licensed databases and online publications, and telephone and fax. State employees, like other professionals, want the information and materials they need delivered to their desktop computers. In most instances they do not have the time to leave the office and go to the state library except when they have extensive research to do in the physical collections. Functioning as a place of business rather than as a typical public library will help to reinforce the leadership and consulting role of the state library while diminishing the expectation that the state library is a public library with similar services and staff roles.

Federal Documents on Deposit

SDSL currently participates in the federal depository library program. The state library selects for their collection only a relatively small number of subject areas while collaborating with the other depository libraries in the state. With the growing trend for federal documents to be in digital form and available on the web, the number of actual paper documents that are added to the collections is small. The purchase of the MARCive service to provide the bibliographic records for the documents selected by South Dakota depositories makes the cataloging of these materials, whether in paper or electronic

formats, easy. This spring, in anticipation of many of the recommended changes, the staff has cleaned the document collection, withdrawn superseded and unnecessary duplicate holdings and consolidated the document collection, thus making it easier to use and to manage. It is recommended that the state library review the actual use of federal documents rather than the anticipated use, and consider reducing its depository selections even further. A number of libraries in the state are depository libraries and their selections of agency publications has been coordinated so as to ensure fairly comprehensive coverage within the state but in a distributed rather than a central model. The University of Minnesota's library is the regional depository and it receives all items distributed under the program. Borrowing an occasional document from it would not be difficult even if something were not found in South Dakota.

South Dakota State Documents

During the past few months the staff has shifted state documents, withdrawn unnecessary duplicates and identified more essential older documents for future digitizing to provide easier access via the web. The state document collections are now in much better condition and are easier to use. The digitization project to make all current state documents available via the web is proceeding. The staff now has the ability to harvest all new "documents" posted on state government web pages and does this harvesting on a regular basis in addition to the work of constantly identifying new documents produced by state departments, agencies and offices. Although statutes mandate that all state documents be provided to the state library for it to fulfill its mandated function as the official depository library and to distribute copies of documents to libraries elsewhere in the state who participate in the state document program, many documents are difficult to identify, find, and acquire. Because there are no penalties for failing to provide the state library with the requisite copies of documents, it is easy for the depository program to be forgotten as a result of personnel changes and as agencies develop new publications. Because this is a central role for the state library, every effort should be made to educate managers at all levels of state government regarding the depository role of the state library and the advantages to them for complying with the requirements. This educational role is another essential function to be fulfilled by the Research staff. An improvement in the percent of documents actually sent to the state library, whether in paper or electronic formats, will enable the library to better fulfill this mandated role in an efficient manner. Additionally, Library Technician Barbara Nickolas can be engaged in identifying and preparing for digitization those documents of historical significance that are frequently referenced and/or used.

There has been some confusion regarding the difference between the role of the SDSL and the University of South Dakota's library role in archiving state documents. It is recommended that representatives of the two libraries begin a dialogue to clarify the appropriate role for each and to avoid unnecessary duplication of work in processing, retrieving and storing in public buildings the large quantity of state documents. USD is not able to do the digitizing of state documents while SDSL now does it as routine work with the intention of digitizing selective historical documents as resources allow. Once reasonable agreements are reached by the two libraries, those agreements should be shared with the library community and any necessary statutory changes should be pursued.

State Library Web Pages

The digitization of state documents and the design and maintenance of the state library's web presence is managed by Librarian LaVera Rose, who while considered part of the administration, actually works with the document and Research staff in many aspects of her job. The new design for the web pages and the redesign and expansion of many additional web pages is currently in process. While attending some South Dakota Library Association meetings, LaVera Rose became aware of how little librarians and their staff members seem to know about what is available via the SDSL web resources. She is now conducting a survey of the library community in order to gain insight about the use made of the state library web pages and other electronic resources. She will use this information to make appropriate changes to these resources. It is recommended that the staff of the state library engage the library community in more dialogue about resources, needs, and the needs of clients using local libraries. This will enable the state library to better serve the libraries and to better understand the information needs expressed by patrons in school, public and academic libraries. The state library is also establishing an advisory group to help in the evaluation and selection of appropriate electronic resources for the statewide network. It is recommended that the newly approved mission for the state library be prominently displayed on the state library website.

SoDakLIVE and SDMemory

These electronic resources maintained and continually enhanced by the state library staff are key resources for libraries and citizens. The staff is currently considering another means of indexing and searching SoDakLIVE and recognizes the need for more training and perhaps online tutorials to aid users. These types of knowledge tools directly related to South Dakota information are central to the mission of the state library. By providing state government employees with essential information in a format that delivers the information directly to their desktops and by using professional skill to develop innovative services, the state library (under the direction of LaVera Rose) is modeling the types of library services that are expected of other libraries. More innovative and demonstration projects by the state library or sponsored/funded by the state library with LSTA funds should be encouraged and criteria for grants should address the use of funds for innovative projects that meet specific user needs.

Circulation and Interlibrary Loan

Circulation

A new circulation policy is needed to accommodate the changes in the collections themselves and the purposes of the remaining collections. With the changes in the public service or reference area of the library, circulation to individual walk-in clients will diminish allowing staff to be assigned to other work or to areas where their work is not interrupted by being responsive to individuals using the state library as an annex to the local public library. With a reduction in the circulation of popular materials, there will be a proportional reduction in the work associated with overdue materials, fines, and bills for lost and unreturned materials, thus allowing staff to engage in activities that might better serve the entire library community rather than the citizens who incidentally live close to the state library.

State Library Card

The state library card process as it now exists has a number of difficulties. State

library staff members are already trying to find reasonable solutions. However, this issue is larger than the state library. It is recommended that the state library involve more members of the library community by establishing a task force to consider the SDSL library card issue that relates to both access to databases from home and circulation privileges at the state library, but to also consider other possibilities for authentication. The technology is constantly evolving so that new possibilities emerge. During the public meetings the “statewide library card”—the ideal for some and the scourge of others—was raised many times by citizens. While libraries worry about “ownership” and “home location” the citizens just want to be able to have reasonable access to the information resources within the state. Perhaps as more emphasis is put upon reasonable resource sharing, new solutions might emerge. The state library card, however, does need to be more concurrent with practices at local libraries and not be a means by which citizens can bypass local libraries. Such activity and processes do not serve to build support for local libraries or to get citizens involved in the decisions, policies, and procedures being imposed by local library boards.

Interlibrary Loan

While the state library has served as a primary source for a majority of the interlibrary loan materials for public and school libraries, as the collections are dispersed to other library locations, the lending functions will also be dispersed, thus leveling the load and allowing libraries to be supportive of one another in a more responsible and equal manner. Additionally, the state library has served as a clearing house for libraries who are not members of the statewide network, SDLN. The state library currently identifies for a requesting library the libraries that hold specific titles. Once the requesting library knows which libraries hold what they need, they can do an interlibrary loan request. The state library also requests materials directly from other libraries on behalf of libraries and then the state library routes the received material to the requesting library. All of these functions are labor intensive and can be more efficiently handled directly by the libraries if they have access to the electronic bibliographic network (SDLN for South Dakota holdings only or WorldCat for comprehensive holdings). In addition to having access to what other libraries hold, local public and school libraries have an obligation as members of the library community to share their holdings with the other libraries in the state.

It is recommended that finding cost effective solutions to the statewide sharing of bibliographic records be a priority for the state library and be the particular responsibility of the state librarian working in conjunction with SDLN and those libraries currently not included in the network. Finding cost effective options, finding funding solutions and providing education and training to enable libraries to function in an environment where libraries are expected to be more self-sufficient is not a small challenge. Other states have addressed these issues utilizing a variety of means. There are solutions, but their success lies as much in attitude as in technology. Unless more of the libraries in South Dakota embrace their roles in a network of libraries and recognize their shared responsibilities for citizens’ access to information, it will be difficult to make interlibrary loan function successfully for all types and sizes of libraries.

Technical Services

At the suggestion of the consultant, the staff members in technical services, with the very capable leadership of Librarian Colleen Kirby, have recently completed a detailed review of all operations and have begun the process of identifying things that could be streamlined, processes that might be removed from the work flow altogether, and areas where some creative solutions might be appropriate. The flowcharts they created and the clear thinking that they have applied to this process have already opened up the potential for change and the possibility of re-allocating some human resources during the transformation process. Changes in the nature, extent, and purposes for the state library physical collections will further impact the work of technical service personnel. They are to be commended for their efforts in this area already. The work is just begun, but their positive attitudes and willingness to question "the way we have always done it" will lead them to very positive solutions.

Selection and Acquisition

Under the existing system, a large array of library reviewing journals are routed to approximately six librarians. They note appropriate titles to be purchased, and send these, along with any other acquisition requests to the acquisition technician. Until recently, all materials selected have been ordered, including many fiction and some nonfiction books purchased to fill interlibrary loan requests. Materials are ordered and received in a very timely manner. The materials then proceed forward for cataloging and physical processing. At the recommendation of the consultant, work is already underway on some of the following important aspects in the selection and acquisition areas:

- ✓ A totally new collection development policy is necessary to guide both the selection of new items and the de-selection of items deemed no longer useful or appropriate for the SDSL collections.
- ✓ The assignment of more specific and exclusive collection responsibilities for individual librarians so that accountability for this important aspect of their positions might be more readily built into their job performance appraisals.
- ✓ Organizing the selection processes to eliminate duplicate work by librarians in reading reviews, routing journals, and responsibilities for the collection will make them more available for other responsibilities.
- ✓ Neither the state librarian nor the deputy state librarian need to be involved in these responsibilities.

Cataloging and Processing

In most libraries today the majority of the cataloging work is "copy cataloging" rather than original cataloging where an individual has to analyze the content and focus of an item and then both classify it and describe it in detail. The state library has one large area of collection responsibilities that do require original cataloging. This is South Dakota state documents. Not only do state libraries everywhere provide the original cataloging for their own state publications but the entire rest of the world relies upon that professional work to be accurate and appropriate. The state library provides a valuable professional service not only for state government and the citizens of South Dakota but also for the world at large by providing bibliographic access to information and knowledge

produced by state government. This detailed and exacting work will continue as part of the mandate to be the depository library for state documents. The staff in technical services, in particular Carol Hageman and Colleen Kirby do an excellent job of providing the bibliographic records for these and other materials. As the amount of new materials decreases, the cataloging timeframe for unique items will improve and the time available to fulfill these responsibilities will more adequately match the work load.

SDLN (South Dakota Library Network)

The technical services staff members, especially Colleen Kirby and Carol Hageman, have worked long hours with the SDLN staff and staff members from other libraries to make the new state network software work. Sometimes it has meant finding a “work-around” approach and sometimes it has been a matter of figuring out how to make the system work as efficiently as possible despite the complexity and difficulties of the software. Work with SDLN will continue to be an essential element of the state library’s responsibilities in its role both as coordinator for libraries and as facilitators of a network to enable libraries to share resources.¹⁰

In order for libraries in the state to share more of their resources amongst themselves rather than relying upon the state library for routine materials of a popular or school nature, it will be necessary for the holdings of all libraries to be made available to other libraries. The libraries all need to be able to search efficiently the combined holdings within the state and to do efficient electronic interlibrary loan requests. If it is determined that the holdings of the smaller public and all of the school system libraries in South Dakota cannot be included in SDLN or if it is determined that a more cost effective approach will be to run a parallel network for the nonacademic libraries, then the state library will have the further responsibility of implementing this two-tiered network approach. The technology makes it possible for parallel networks running on different software platforms to communicate with one another. There are bound to be other options available as technological solutions advance. The final options are not yet clear but there is no question that the citizens deserve a network that gives all of them access to shared resources. No matter what the final solutions are, the state library will continue to have a large part of the responsibility for helping libraries to use networks appropriately. Colleen Kirby is another librarian whose responsibilities might be wholly or in part in Library Development in the future. She already works with libraries as a consultant on cataloging and network issues and she is skilled as a trainer and librarian.

The role of SDSL relative to the network known as SDLN needs to change in a number of ways:

- ✓ The state librarian should be made a permanent member of the Executive Committee.
- ✓ The state librarian should no longer have the permanent role as chair of the Executive Committee but rather the leadership role should be shared in some other manner decided by the membership.
- ✓ The SDSL should cease providing bookkeeping services for SDLN. It is not a situation that benefits either organization. The invoicing, tracking, receiving, and transferring of funds should be done by the network.

¹⁰ SDCL 14-1-48

Statewide Electronic Resources

The state library has recently solved part of its personnel recruiting problems by temporarily hiring a librarian in Rapid City. Working from her home she will provide all of the electronic support for the databases and other electronic resources purchased by the state library for the benefit of all citizens. Her knowledge as an accomplished cataloger and her fairly recent library education together have prepared her for exactly this type of detailed and technical position. This solution is a good one given the difficulty of hiring the high level skills necessary for many library positions, the poor salaries and the difficulty of uprooting families for work in Pierre. It is recommended that the state library consider additional possibilities for locating consulting and training staff in South Dakota locations other than Pierre. This applies especially, of course, to those assigned to Library Development but as with the electronic resources position, it might also work quite well with a selection of other positions.

The databases and other statewide electronic resources provided by the state library for the citizens are highly valued by all segments of the library community and the public. The libraries have reported that they could not begin to meet the information needs of their clients without these resources. Citizens who are home-schooling their children rely on these resources as well. The state library is establishing an advisory committee to work with the electronic resources librarian in identifying appropriate resources to be considered for the statewide network. This is an important step in including all types of libraries in the work and decisions of the state library.

De-Selection

Once the new Collection Development Policy is in place, the de-selection or weeding of the state library collections can proceed so that the materials remaining and those that might be distributed to other libraries in the state will be worth the labor and time necessary to accomplish their relocation. Again, this routine work has not been accomplished because the staff members have been busy with other types of work. Unfilled staff vacancies, especially over the past few years, have made this and other routine work difficult to accomplish.

Serials

All libraries are being faced with completely reconsidering their handling of serials titles (journals, magazines, electronic and print items that are subscription based and have recurring publication items). In the past libraries held large back files for potential future use. Today it is possible to borrow or even buy a single article when it is needed so that back files are no longer considered the necessity that they once were. Furthermore, user behavior studies continue to confirm that library clients use fulltext articles easily available in journal databases rather than endure the hassle of trying to get something in print format. The exceptions are, of course, scholars, but they tend to use university libraries, not state libraries. The state library will need to review all of its back files of journals and to make changes in holding policies as appropriate given both its mission to serve state government and its final definitions for the South Dakota collection and other retained collections. In the area of processing, it is already looking at ways to streamline the handling of individual issues. It is recommended that during the coming months all standing orders and all subscriptions be reviewed in light of the changed mission.

Library Development

Consultants: Leaders & Facilitators

The importance of the library development staff has already been reviewed as has some suggestions for ways to further expand the potential of library development by using existing staff and giving them part-time assignments in Library Development. Using existing staff and their expertise to expand the scope and capabilities of Library Development operations is a practical and reasonable approach to the dilemma imposed by budgets and salaries. It is essential that the two vacant positions be filled. These are currently described as Continuing Education Coordinator and Deputy Director. It is unclear at this point whether the Deputy Director will be able to be fully engaged in Library Development given the role of supervising the changes, dealing with federal grants and freeing the state librarian to work with the libraries on more coordinated services. While clear resolution of these difficulties is not possible at the moment, the state librarian, the board, and the Secretary of Education together might be able to outline plans to resolve the personnel shortage soon.

It is worth repeating that the library development staff members need to have professional library educations, experience, especially with rural libraries and/or communities, and the ability to teach and to do consulting. This bundle of skills cannot usually be hired at less than \$40,000. One is sometimes very lucky and finds an outstanding person who can afford to take a low salary. One is more often not so lucky and one gets what one pays for and sometimes pays dearly for it. The Board and the Secretary of Education are urged to once again attempt to deal with the state personnel pay structure on behalf of the SDSL. The latest national salary survey information for information specialists (librarians) surely puts the salaries offered by SDSL at the very bottom of the career opportunities available for qualified, experienced and highly skilled librarians.

Grants

In addition to federal LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) and IMLS (Institute for Museums and Library Services) funds, the state library staff members have worked with other agencies to acquire jointly a grant for mutual benefit and they have also been successful in acquiring Gates and other grant monies. It is recommended that the state library try not to become involved in any new grant programs until staffing levels are 100% and resolution of major changes have been accomplished. There are already a great many projects to be managed during the next 12 to 24 months.

The mandated review and evaluation of the LSTA Five-Year Plan is due early in 2007. In addition, the Board will need to develop a new Five-Year Plan to guide the use of LSTA grant funds. It is strongly recommended that the state library board take a very active role in identifying, with the help of the statewide library community, appropriate types of projects for this next period of time. This presents an opportunity to move from the theoretical mission statement to actual projects that will move the agenda forward. These decisions, the goals, objectives, and strategies cannot be decided in a vacuum or in a short period of time. The board ought to put the initial stages of this work on their working agenda soon.

Some states use a large portion of their LSTA grant money for competitive grants to enable libraries to try innovative and/or demonstration projects. They also encourage, as IMLS has been insisting, that projects be collaborative with different types of libraries working together for the benefit of citizens. The board might review some projects funded by other states and the approach that other states have taken with at least a portion of their money. In South Dakota, the use of LSTA funds has been managed primarily from the state library and the funds have been allocated to projects often initiated by the state library.

Materials for Continuing Education & Consulting

One of the collections recommended for retention is the professional development collection. It now consists of library science-related books and videos with some older audio tapes as well. The definition of this collection in the new Collection Development Policy should reflect the purpose of the collection as current not historical and might also include those current and appropriate materials related to technology and organizational management as well as public administration that could be used by librarians and staff members in libraries. The collection ought to have a strong component of DVD materials in order that the collection can serve not only for the reading and enlightenment of an individual but as a means of extending staff training beyond what can be provided by the limited library development staff and outside trainers and consultants.

Services for Youth

The work of Librarian Jasmine Rousey has further extended and enhanced the consulting and training work on behalf of the youth of South Dakota. The summer reading program coordinating by the state library through a cooperative program with other state libraries eliminates the need for each library or for the SDSL to develop themes, materials, programs, handouts, and visuals of all types for local libraries to use in the promotion and provision of a summer reading program for the children in local libraries. In addition, she and previous consultants have worked with school libraries and with various educational groups to provide appropriate reading lists and other support materials for parents and educators.

She has worked with the state's Head Start program in the handling of books purchased through a joint grant and intended for local Head Start programs. It is strongly recommended that she examine the terms of the latest grant and that consideration be given to managing the books for local programs in a more efficient manner. At this time the grant provides the funding to purchase books and the staff at SDSL selects, orders, receives, catalogs, processes, and then circulates the books to local programs for a two-year period. At the end of two years, the books are recalled to the state library. Many books are declared lost and not returned and many others are returned with damage. The books do not need to be cataloged and processed for inclusion in the SDSL collection. They could be selected by the state library children's consultant and purchased with the SDSL discount but merely stamped with some indication of the source of funding and then sent to eligible Head Start programs for them to keep and use for as long as they last. If a new grant is written under this program, these possibilities should be evaluated. The cost of library processing is high and human resources can be more effectively used in other ways. The existing children's collections, including those purchased under this or previous grants for Head Start materials should be withdrawn from the SDSL collection

and distributed to appropriate other sources in the state—Head Start programs, K-12 schools or elsewhere.

Operations

Location

Included in operations at the state library are the following support functions regardless of the organization structure: mail, financial services, secretarial support, facility and physical resource management, and reception. These functions are essential in the organization and they are often the points at which other state agencies as well as the library community and the public first interact with the state library. In many ways, these are the initial face and voice of the state library. It is imperative that the individuals fulfilling these roles be well trained and professional. It is strongly recommended that more attention be given to helping these individuals learn more about their functions and the operations of state government through mentoring, through training, through observation and through attention from a senior member of the staff. This does not have to be the state librarian who already has too many responsibilities given the staff shortages. This area of operations cannot be ignored. It influences the impression visitors have of the state library including visitors coming for job interviews. It influences the way those working in the state library perceive the organization. During the course of this study, numerous comments were made about the lack of professionalism in the library's operation and appearance. One place this has been especially true has been in the administrative area. Helping this area to operate in a more business and professional manner will help to influence operations throughout the library.

Administration

Deputy State Librarian

While a search for a deputy state librarian has not been successful, primarily because of salary relative to qualifications and responsibilities, there is now an added variable that will need to be addressed by the Board, the state librarian and the Secretary of Education. If the individual filling this position is to function as a C.O.O. (Chief Operations Officer) and project manager for the many changes that will need to take place over the course of the next two years, then the skill set necessary may differ from the skill set initially considered appropriate. It is also likely to be different from the skill set that might be appropriate for a state librarian in the future. Before proceeding with an aggressive recruiting campaign to fill this position, the role the deputy will play does need to be clarified. Clearer definitions of the role of the deputy and of the state librarian need to be negotiated in order to be certain that the skills sets and personal qualities are appropriate for each.

One component of the deputy position as previously defined would be the administration of LSTA funding, reporting, grants administration, etc., and the supervision and direction of Library Development. Those two components constitute a large and specialized position. If it is not done by this person then it needs to be determined under what position these very important responsibilities will be placed.

State Librarian

The state librarian has been operating at a disadvantage because of continuing vacancies in two key professional positions—deputy state librarian and continuing education consultant. In addition to trying to do her own job and these other two, she has been closely involved in this study and has devoted much time to assisting the consultant throughout the project. It is clear that putting anyone in this type of situation is both unacceptable from a business standpoint and from a personal standpoint. It is recommended that the board and the Secretary of Education consider ways of putting additional resources into the recruitment effort. Such resources might mean assistance with the preparation of the recruitment and advertising documents, the position description, and the interview and evaluation process or it might mean finding other types of resources to assist in this effort. Since it is unlikely that there will be someone in the position prior to mid-August or September, it is further recommended that temporary assistance of some type be considered for the interim.

From the beginning of this study questions have arisen regarding the role of the state library in the South Dakota Library Network (SDLN) and in particular about the role of the state librarian as permanent chair of the Executive Committee of SDLN. SDLN members, the former director of SDLN, and many others with and without inside knowledge have expressed their opinions regarding this issue. Having listened to the discussions, considered the potential implications as far as it is possible to discern the future impact of changes made in the present, the following are the recommendations of the consultant. The state librarian should have a permanent position on the Executive Committee, not only to represent the state library as a library member of the network but to represent the broader arena of libraries who are not at the SDLN table; (2) the state librarian does not have to chair the Executive Committee to have a strong voice and presence; (3) it is essential for the future of library service for all citizens of South Dakota that all duly established public and school libraries share their resources and have library resources shared with them within responsible guidelines, and this means; (4) that either all libraries in the state become members of SDLN or the network has to change and/or a new network has to be developed that will allow and encourage smaller libraries to participate in a shared vision of library services, especially given an environment of limited resources of all types.

One key element that has not been widely discussed is the need for the state library to play a more active role in the Department of Education (DOE). Although the state librarian is involved as part of the management team of DOE, other staff members might also play roles working with those in DOE whose work directly or indirectly influences curriculum, standards, school funding, student performance, and other educational initiatives which might include the role or lack thereof, of the school library media program and its personnel. Research in numerous states in the U.S. and now in Canada has shown that the one independent factor that influences performance in the testing environment now prevalent in K-12 education is the quality of the school library media program (resources, educational integration, and qualified personnel).¹¹ One hopes that DOE will find ways to include individual expertise from the state library in their work and programs.

¹¹ Library Research Services: Research and Statistics about Libraries. <http://www.lrs.org/impact.asp>. As viewed, June 6, 2006.

Library Board

The library board faces many challenges right now and it will face many more in the next few years. These include guiding the change process, assisting with the preparation and approval of appropriate policies, assuring that sufficient funds are allocated for staff training and education as jobs and responsibilities change, and moving the state library into a leadership position within the library community. The board not only needs to be working closely with the state librarian and the key staff members but also with the Secretary of Education. It is a time for the board members to be visible in the state and be actively involved in promoting change and in assisting the state librarian in improving the image of the state library in all segments of the educational and library community.

Looking a bit further into the future, it is clear that Dorothy Liegl is likely to retire at some point within the next two to four years. Now is the time to begin to consider the skill set and the personal qualities that will be needed by the next leader of the state library. Are there individuals in the organization now who might be groomed for the position? If so, what experiences and/or training would they need in order to be prepared to be an acting state librarian or a permanent one? The choice of a state librarian is the most important decision that a board makes. In order to be ready for that eventuality it is important to begin now to consider possible courses of action. There may be work that is necessary to prepare the way for a successful search in the future.

The board is encouraged to learn more about what the boards in other states do in their advisory and/or policy roles with state libraries. Each state has defined the roles and the authority differently, but there are still many things to learn from the practices elsewhere. In some states boards function as rubber stamps for the state library and seldom deal with issues of substance. In other states boards of the state libraries function as involved, professional advisors to the library administration and make thoughtful policy decisions after careful review of issues and facts. While the board needs to find its own comfort zone for the political realities in which it operates, it can be very helpful to examine the issues and problems being addressed elsewhere. There is no professional association for the boards of state libraries. That means that it is not easy to network or to learn about other situations, but it can be done.

Facilities

The changes proposed for the state library will result in some reduction in square footage for operations. At this point it is not possible to estimate how much space may be considered for occupation by other state agencies. However, it is likely that approximately one-half to three-quarters of one floor may become vacant. The work loads in a few departments will be reduced resulting in reallocation of space but the biggest space savings will result from dispersing some parts of the collections to libraries elsewhere in the state. Many of the collections will remain because they fulfill the libraries charge "to maintain appropriate collections of library materials to supplement the collections of other libraries in the state and to meet the research and informational needs of the Legislature and the employees of state government."¹² It is premature for state facility planning

¹² SDCL 14-1-47

personnel to do more than begin discussions with the state library. As the library moves forward with their reorganization plans and their space needs become clearer, they will be in a better position to discuss actual square footage.

There is much room for improvement in the arrangement of space in the state library. Staff should begin soon to consider the adjacency relationships of various functions and the need for the state library to have a reception area that serves all personnel and provides guidance to those entering the library for consulting, training, and appointments. The current arrangements are very inadequate from the standpoint of a business or professional operation. The situation can only improve! (Oh, and there is the issue of carpeting!)

Timelines

The state library staff members have already begun work on timelines with details to be expanded as the necessary processes are outlined and as the public relations work and the necessary changes in the libraries around the state help to define reasonable timelines. Responsible handling of the print and nonprint resources that are valuable assets to the citizens of South Dakota will require that the work of identifying appropriate materials to be withdrawn from the SDSL and then made available as resources in other libraries will take time. In addition to doing the day-to-day work, filling vacant positions, doing the necessary federally mandated LSTA five-year program review and preparation of a new five-year plan, the staff will need to determine how materials are to be equitably distributed to interested libraries who can make those materials available to other libraries through interlibrary loan. The creation of project timelines and the monitoring of progress should be given to someone whose primary job it will be to move this two-year transformation forward. A very organized cheerleader who can also be a detail-driven managerial force—in other words, a good project manager—is necessary to see this process through.

Conclusions

The Board of the South Dakota State Library and the Secretary of Education, Dr. Rick Melmer, are to be commended for their recognition that the status quo for the state library was simply not an acceptable road for the future. This project had the potential to break the state library beyond the ability of anyone to fix it given the need to question everything and everyone, to identify problems as well as successes, and to take nothing on faith. Up until this year there have been, as the psychologists might explain, a number of elephants in the living room that have been politely ignored. This project made it possible to examine those sacred elephants and to question both their location and their existence. The project has succeeded in opening many minds and in generating discussions about what might be possible rather than allowing people, both inside and outside of the state library, to remain stuck explaining all the reasons why the future cannot be different from the past and why things cannot work or cannot be done! There is an excitement in many library quarters in South Dakota and this includes the state library. There is the sense that better things might be possible and that change will not be

the end but maybe the beginning of a brighter future with success defined in new ways. There is much hard work, hard thinking, and problem solving yet to be done. The answers will not please everyone; they never do. It is up to the Board, the state library staff, the State Librarian, and Dr. Melmer to guide the transformation and to help the South Dakota State Library fulfill its mission "to provide leadership for innovation and excellence in libraries."

My thanks are owed to Dr. Rick Melmer for his support, availability, and open-mindedness during this study; to the members of the State Library Board for their dedication and willingness to consider new ideas; to Dorothy Liegl, State Librarian for her excellent driving on snowy country roads, her good companionship, and primarily her willingness to put herself on the line and open herself to change and the intrusions of a consultant (the worst of all evils); to the members of the state library staff who have been honest, open, and willing to learn and consider alternatives; and last but not least, to the members of the library community and the citizens who support them. The gifts of your time and your thoughtful comments and discussion helped me to see how much South Dakota libraries are loved by the citizens.

APPENDIX A

Key Comments and Insights from Conference Calls

APPENDIX B

Comments from Focus Groups & Public Meetings

APPENDIX C

Reference Statistics & Library Use

January – April 2006

APPENDIX D

Analysis & Examples Reference Questions

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